

# THE MAN ON THE BOX

By HAROLD MACGRATH

Author of "The Gray Clerk," "The Puppet Master"

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The colonel grew rigid in his chair. "Do not misunderstand me. Before I saw her, you were but the key to what I desired. As her father the matter took on a personal side, I could not very conscientiously make love to your daughter and at the same time—"

Karloff left the sentence incomplete. "And Betty?"—in half a whisper. "Has refused me,"—quietly. "But I have not given her up; no, I have not given her up."

"What do you mean to do?" Karloff got up and walked about the room. "Make her my wife,"—simply. He stooped and studied the titles of some of the books in the cases. He turned to find that the colonel had risen and was facing him with flaming eyes.

"I demand to know how you intend to accomplish this end," the colonel said. "My daughter shall not be dragged into this trap."

"To-morrow night I shall explain everything, to-night, nothing,"—imperiously. "Karloff, to-night I stand a ruined and dishonored man. My head, once held so proudly before my fellow-men, is bowed with shame. The country I have fought and bled for I have in part betrayed. But not for my gain, not for my gain. No, no! Thank God that I can say that! Personal greed has not tainted me. Alone, I should have gone serenely into some poorhouse and eeked out an existence on my half-pay. But this child of mine, whom I love doubly, for her mother's sake and her own,—I would gladly cut off both arms to spare her a single pain, to keep her in the luxury which she still believes rightfully to be hers. When the fever of gaming possessed me, I should have told her, I did not; therein lies my mistake, the mistake which has brought me to this horrible end. Virgilus sacrificed his child to save her; I will sacrifice my honor to save mine from poverty. Force her to wed a man she does not love? No. To-morrow night we shall complete this disgraceful bargain. The plans are all finished but one. Now leave me; I wish to be alone."

"Sir, it is my deep regret—" "Go; there is nothing more to be said."

Karloff withdrew. He went soberly. There was nothing sneering nor contemptuous in his attitude. Indeed, there was frown of pity on his face. He recognized that circumstances had dragged down a noble man; that



STARING AT THE MOON.

chance had tricked him of his honor. How he hated his own evil plan! He squared his shoulders, determined once more to put it to the touch to win or lose it all.

He found her at the bow-window, staring up at the moon. As he remarked this room was dark, and she did not instantly recognize him.

"I am moon-gazing," she said. "Let me sigh for it with you. Perhaps together we may bring it down." There was something very pleasing in the quality of his tone.

"Ah, it is you, Count? I could not see. But let us not sigh for the moon; it would be useless. Does any one get his own wish-moon? Does it not always hang so high, so far away?" "The music has affected you?" "As it always does. When I hear a voice like madam's, I grow sad, and a pity for the great world surges over me."

"Pity is the invisible embrace which enfolds all animate things. There is pity for the wretched, for the fool, for the innocent knave, for those who are criminals by their own folly; pity for those who love without reward; pity that embraces . . . even me."

Silence. "Has it ever occurred to you that there are two beings in each of us; that between these two there is a continual conflict, and that the victor finally prints the victory on the face? For what lines and haggard a man's face but the victory of the evil that is in him? For what makes aged ruddy and smooth of face and clear of eye but the victory of the good that is in him? It is so. I still love you; I still have the courage to ask you to be my wife. Shall there be faces haggard or ruddy, lined or smooth?" She stepped aside. She did not comprehend all he said, and his face was in the shadow—that is to say, unreadable.

"I am sorry, very, very sorry."

"How easily you say that!"

"No, not easily; for only you knew how hard it comes, for I know that it inflicts a hurt,"—gently. "Ah, Count, why indeed do I not love you?"—impulsively, for at that time she held him in genuine regard. "You represent all that a woman could desire in a man."

"You could learn,"—with an eager step toward her.

"You do not believe that; you know that you do not. Love has nothing to learn; the heart speaks, and that is all. My heart does not speak when I see you, and I shall never marry a man to whom it does not. You ask for something which I can not give, and each time you ask only adds to the pain."

"This is finally?"

"It is."

"Eh, well; then I must continue on to the end."

She interpreted this as a plaint of his coming loneliness.

"Here!" she said. She held in her hands two red roses. She thrust one toward him. "That is all I may give you."

For a moment he hesitated. There were thorns, invisible and stinging.

"Take it!"

He accepted it, kissed it gravely, and hid it.

"This is the bitterest moment in my life, and doubly because I love you."

When the portiere fell behind him, she locked her hands, grieving that all she could give him was an ephemeral flower. How many men had turned from her in this wise, even as she began to depend upon them for their friendships! The dark room oppressed her and she stepped out once more into the silver of moonshine. Have you ever beheld a lovely woman fondle a lovely rose? She drew it, pendent on its slender stem, slowly across her lips, her eyes shining mistily with waking dreams. She breathed in the perfume, then cupped the flower in the palm of her hand and pressed it again and again to her lips. A long white arm stretched forward and upward toward the moon, and when it withdrew the hand was empty.

Warburton, hidden behind the vines, waited until she was gone, and then hunted in the grass for the precious flower. On his hands and knees he groped. The dew did not matter. And when at last he found it, not all the treasures of the fabled Ophir would have tempted him to part with it. It would be a souvenir for his later days.

As he rose from his knees he was confronted by a broad-shouldered, elderly man in evening clothes. The end of a cigar burned brightly between his teeth.

"I'll take that flower, young man, if you please."

Warburton's surprise was too great for sudden recovery.

"It is mine, Colonel," he stammered. The colonel filled away his cigar and caught his butler roughly by the arm.

"Warburton, what the devil does this mean—a lieutenant of mine peddling soup around a gentleman's table?"

## CHAPTER XIX.

"OH, MISTER BUTLER."

Warburton had never lacked that rare and peculiar gift of immediately adapting himself to circumstances. To lie now would be folly, worse than useless. He had addressed this man at his side by his military title. He stood committed. He saw that he must throw himself wholly on the colonel's mercy and his sense of the humorous. He pointed toward the stables and drew the colonel after him; but the colonel held back.

"That rose first; I insist upon having that rose till you have given me a satisfactory account of yourself."

Warburton reluctantly surrendered his treasure. Force of habit is a peculiar one. The colonel had no real authority to demand the rose; but Warburton would no more have thought of disobeying than of running away.

"You will give it back to me?"

"That remains to be seen. Go on; I am ready to follow you. And I do not want any dragging story, either." The colonel spoke impatiently.

Warburton led him into his room and turned on the light. The colonel seated himself on the edge of the cot and lighted a fresh cigar.

"Well, sir, out with it. I am waiting."

Warburton took several turns about the room. "I don't know how the deuce to begin, Colonel. It began with a joke that turned out wrong."

"Indeed?"—sarcastically. "Let me hear about this joke."

M'sieu Zhames dallied no longer, but plunged boldly into his narrative. Sometimes the colonel stared at him as if he beheld a species of lunatic absolutely new to him, sometimes he laughed silently, sometimes he frowned.

"That's all," said Zhames; and he stood watching the colonel with dread in his eyes.

"Well, of all the damn fools!"

"Sir?"

"Of all the jackasses!"

Warburton bit his lip angrily. The colonel swung the rose to and fro. "Yes, sir, a damn fool!"

"I dare say that I am, sir. But I have gone too far to back out now. Will you give me back that rose, Colonel?"

"What do you mean by her?"—

coldly.

"I love her with all my heart,"—hotly. "I want her for my comrade, my wife, my companion, my partner in all I have to do. I love her, and I don't care a hang who knows it."

"Not so loud, my friend; not so loud."

"Oh, I don't care who hears,"—discouragedly.

"That beats the very devil! You've got me all talled up. Is Betty Annesley a girl of the kind we read about in the papers as eloping with her groom. What earthly chance had you in this guise, I should like to know?"

"I only wanted to be near her; I did not look ahead."

"Well, I should say not! How long were you behind that trellis?"

"A year on it seemed to me."

"Any lunatics among your ancestors?"

Warburton shook his head, smiling wanly.

"I can't make it out," declared the colonel. "A graduate of West Point, the top of Troop A, the hero of a hundred ball-rooms, disguised as a hostler and serving soup!"

"Always keep the motive in mind, Colonel; you were young yourself once."

The colonel thought of the girl's mother. Yes he had been young once, but not quite so young as this cub of his.

"What chance do you suppose you have against the handsome Russian?"

"She has rejected him,"—thoughtlessly.

"Ha!"—frowning. "So you were eavesdropping?"

"Wait a moment, Colonel. You know that I am very fond of music. I was listening to the music. It had ceased and I was waiting for it to begin again, when I heard voices."

"Why did you not leave then?"

"And be observed? I dared not!"

The colonel chewed the end of his cigar in silence.

"And now may I have that rose, sir?"—quietly.

The colonel observed him warily. He knew that quiet tone. It said that if he refused to give up the rose he would have to fight for it, and probably get licked into the bargain.

"I've a notion you might attempt to take it by force in case I refused."

"I surrendered it peacefully enough, sir."

"So you did. Here." The colonel tossed the flower across the room and Warburton caught it.

"I should like to know, sir, if you are going to expose me. It's no more than I deserve."

The colonel studied the lithographs on the walls. "Your selection?"—with a wave of the hand.

"No, sir. I should like to know what you are going to do. It would relieve my mind. As a matter of fact, I confess that I am growing weary of the mask," Warburton waited.

"You make a very respectable butler, though,"—musingly.

"Shall you expose me, sir?"—persistently.

"No lad. I should not want it to get about that a former officer of mine could possibly make such an ass of himself. You have slept all night in jail, you have groomed horses, you



"SHALL YOU EXPOSE ME?"

have worn a livery which no gentleman with any self-respect would wear, and all to no purpose whatever. Why, in the name of the infernal regions, didn't you meet her in a formal way? There would have been plenty of opportunities."

Warburton shrugged; so did the colonel, who stood up and shook the wrinkles from his trousers.

"Shall you be long in Washington, sir?" asked Warburton, politely.

"In a hurry to get rid of me, eh?"—with a grim smile. "Well, perhaps in a few days."

"Good night."

The colonel stopped at the threshold, and his face melted suddenly into a warm, humorous smile. He stretched out a hand which Warburton grasped most gratefully. His colonel had been playing with him.

"Come back to the army, lad; the east is no place for a man of your kidney. Scrape up a commission and I'll see to it that you get back into the regiment. Life is real out in the great west. People smile too much here; they don't laugh often enough. Smiles have a hundred meanings, laughter but one. Smiles are the hidden places for lies, and sneers, and mockeries, and scandals. Come back to the west; we all want you, the service and I. When I saw you this afternoon I knew you instantly, only I was worried as to what devilment you were up to. Win this girl, if you can; she's worth any kind of a struggle. God bless her! Win her and bring her out west, too."

Warburton wrung the hand in his till the old fellow signified that his fingers were beginning to ache.

"Do you suppose she suspects anything?" ventured Warburton.

"(To Be Continued.)"

# JOURNEY'S END IN LOVERS' MEETING

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Miss Mary Miles and John W. Busch, the former of Paducah and latter of Clarksville, Tenn., were married in Clarksville Tuesday, the marriage terminating one of the most sensational elopements in this end of the state.

The two were determined to marry, and Monday at 11 o'clock took the Cowling for Metropolis to have the knot tied. The girl's father got wind of the elopement and telephoned to Metropolis to stop the issuance of the license and to arrest the girl. This was done, but the girl escaped through a rear door in the hotel and in company with her sweetheart started for the river. A skiff was secured and the couple crossed the river, walked a distance of five miles from the ferry and landed at Maxon's Mill, where a train was secured.

At Paducah the young lady was arrested a second time and turned over to her father, Mr. R. M. Miles, of the Michael Bros. harness shops, who Tuesday morning sent her to Louisville.

Instead of going to Louisville she left the train at a nearby city and with her sweetheart went to Clarksville and was married.

The two will reside in Clarksville where the groom has a good position.

## RED LIGHTS

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Improvements in Broadway's Sidewalks and Buildings Cause Obstructions to Travel.

Paducah is being improved in streets and in buildings and it is noticeable particularly in the night by the hundreds of red lights warring to pedestrians and vehicles.

All the principal thoroughfares are being torn up in the business portion of the town from Broadway one square north and south, and red shaded lanterns are used as signal lights. There are probably more of these lights out in Paducah at this particular time than ever before. This is due especially to the action of the police, who report all street obstructions.

This morning in police court several cases were brought for violation of the ordinance pertaining to this matter, and all contractors are exercising caution in the proper protection of contracts they are fulfilling.

The warrant against The Sun was dismissed, as the contractor was held to be at fault.

An ordinance to prevent persons from keeping open places for sale of liquors within certain hours, or from selling or furnishing such liquors within such hours.

Be it ordained by the General Council of the City of Paducah:

First. It shall be unlawful for any person engaged in the business of selling spirituous, vinous or malt liquors in the City of Paducah, or the agent or employee of such person, to keep open or carry on such business, or to sell or furnish to or for any person any such liquors, between the hour of 12 o'clock midnight and the hour of 5 o'clock a. m., of any day.

Second. Any person violating this ordinance shall be fined not less than ten nor more than twenty-five dollars for each offense.

Third. This ordinance shall take effect from its passage, approval and publication.

Adopted June 4, 1906.

GEO. O. M'BROOM,

President Board of Councilmen.

Adopted June 21, 1906.

EARL PALMER,

President Board of Aldermen, pro tem.

Approved June 23, 1906.

D. A. YEISER, Mayor.

Attest HENRY BAILEY,

City Clerk.

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